

Remarks

Claims 1-8 are pending. Favorable reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Applicants affirm the provisional election of claims 1-8.

Claims 1-8 were objected to. Claim 1 has been amended to overcome this objection.

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicants have amended claim 1 to overcome this U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection.

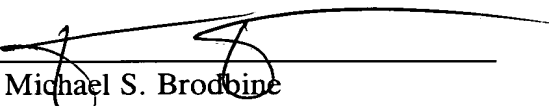
Claims 1-8 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,469,073. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the double patenting rejection. As set forth in the Office Action, the '073 patent does not disclose or suggest mixing layered silicate particles with a polymer to form a treatable silicate polymer mixture. Since this step is not disclosed, taught or suggested, the double patenting rejection is believed to be obviated. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the double patenting rejection.

Applicants submit that the claims are now in a condition for allowance, and respectfully request a notice to that effect. If the Examiner believes that further discussion will advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is highly encouraged to telephone applicants attorney at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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